(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has been amended eight times till date.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not a ground for divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. The Supreme Court in Navin Kohli *Vs* Neelu Kohli J.T.2006 (3) SC 491 held that because of the change of circumstance and for covering a large number of cases where the marriages are virtually dead and unless this concept is pressed into service, the divorce cannot be granted. The Court further observed that in our considered opinion the legislature must consider irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a ground for grant of divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. The proposed amendment in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 requires consultation with various persons/bodies.

Voting rights to NRIs

3087. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any follow up action has been taken by Government in respect of the announcement made by it regarding providing voting rights to NRIs and by what time they will be eligible to cast their votes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) In order to confer voting rights to Indian citizens absenting from the place of their ordinary residence in India owing to employment, education or otherwise outside India, the Government introduced a Bill, namely, the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2006 in the Rajya Sabha on 27.2.2006. The Bill has been referred to the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice for examination and report.

Rise in pending cases in Gujarat

†3088. Prof. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of pending cases is increasing rapidly in the courts in Gujarat;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the impact on the judicial system due to increase in such cases and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for quick disposal of pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In order to clear the pending cases in various courts, the Government has initiated a number of measures which include, timely filling up of the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, grouping of cases, involving common questions of law, constitution of specialized benches, organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals encouraging alternative modes of dispute resolution like negotiation, mediation and arbitration, and setting up of special courts, Family Courts and Labour Courts. The Government has also set up Fast Track Courts in Gujarat State and has extended their term upto 31.3.2001 for clearing pending cases at District level.

Filling up of backlog vacancies

3089. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of backlog vacancies as on the 31st March, 2004 in the Ministry and various Departments under the Ministry;

(b) whether the Special Drive was carried out to fill in the above backlog vacancies;

(c) if so, the number of vacancies filled in during the last two years, department-wise; and

(d) the backlog vacancies as on the 31st March, 2006?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) There were twenty (20) backlog vacancies as on the 31st March, 2004 in the Ministry of Law and Justice (Deptt. of Legal Affairs -20, Legislative Department- Nil).

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Four.

(d) Sixteen.